

of our scholars, we congratulate them for their prestigious accomplishment. And just to let all of you know, you continue to make all of us proud.

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND ENDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the mothers, daughters, and wives of my district. I stand here in solemn support for women not only in our community, but across our Nation and throughout the world who experience domestic violence each day.

This unacceptable treatment cannot go unnoticed. We must continue to push for better opportunities for those abused in our community.

By providing these women with more options, they can begin to find safety, support, and empowerment for a better way of life. Whether this be supporting a child or finding a better job and employment, it is important that their voices be heard.

I am proud to work with community-based organizations committed to empowering women and ending domestic violence for all. I commend A Woman's Place in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, for their steadfast commitment to a society where all individuals are safe and can flourish.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the leadership staff at A Woman's Place, Mae O'Brien, Lauren Bucksner, Danielle Ferri, and Heather Giampapa, as well as other staff and volunteers committed to promoting peace, quality, and respect in our districts and beyond.

PERKASIE PARK'S 135TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Perkasio Park on its 135th anniversary and celebrate its new status as a National Historic District.

Founded in 1882, Perkasio Park is one of just a handful of intact camp meeting facilities that continue to operate in Pennsylvania. Home to dozens of Victorian-era cottages and buildings, at its height, Perkasio Park was Bucks County's biggest attraction, drawing worshippers and vacationers from Philadelphia and the surrounding region to the quaint, quiet countryside of the Borough of Perkasio.

Last year, thanks to the tireless efforts of volunteers, residents, and community leaders, Perkasio Park was named to the National Register of Historic Places for its role in the American camp meeting movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Through their dedication, the park joined over 150 Bucks County properties on the National Register, including the 1832 South Perkasio Covered Bridge on the other side of town.

I am proud to represent a district that understands and honors its deep-rooted history, and I join with the people in Perkasio in celebrating this momentous anniversary and accomplishment.

MAINTAINING A STRONG DEFENSE IS NOT A NEW CONCEPT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, before it was cool to quote Ronald Reagan's national security philosophy of peace through strength, there was our first Commander in Chief, George Washington, who, in his first State of the Union address, said, "... to be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace."

See, maintaining a strong national defense is not a new concept.

While more war has been diverted, more peace has been kept, and more freedom has been defended by our Nation's armed services, today we risk not only our Nation's security, but the lives of those who serve if we fail to adequately fund our military.

The policies and posture of the past 8 years under the previous administration have left our defense arsenal dilapidated, our position in the world diminished, our allies doubtful, and, unfortunately, our enemies even more determined.

Our military men and women have faced years of cuts, almost a quarter of our entire military budget, with defense spending at historic lows, over \$170 billion, since 2010.

So as the world becomes increasingly dangerous and unstable, the government has forced our armed services to do more with less.

One of the United States' greatest assets in our national security arsenal and one of the crown jewels of west Texas is Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, Texas. Dyess plays a key role in protecting our democracy against the rising global threats, and our airmen from Dyess have been deployed all over the world in countless military and humanitarian operations. Additionally, Dyess hosts the largest B-1 bomber base in the Nation; and the city of Abilene has won the Air Force's award for most supportive communities so many times, they actually changed the name of the award to the Abilene award.

Now, that may sound like I am bragging, but in Texas, that is just telling the truth.

But while we put the lives of these men and women on the line daily and ask them to defend our Nation, they are crippled by this discouraging reality. The Air Force is now the smallest and the oldest it has been in our Nation's history. Altogether, given the current demand, our Nation's Air Force is short 1,500 pilots, 4,000 mechanics.

Before the House Armed Services Committee, General Stephen Wilson testified: "Today we find ourselves less than 50 percent ready across our Air Force, and we have pockets that are even below that."

In fact, just to get by, the Air Force has been utilizing bombers that were designed and constructed for World War II.

This is a national security crisis, Mr. Speaker. This is a great American travesty.

Why?

Because I believe our former President, for political reasons, in my opinion, arbitrarily withdrew troops from critical battlefronts and dangerously drew down our overall military resources.

Today, on behalf of Dyess Air Force Base and all the brave men and women who keep our great country safe, I urge my colleagues to pass the National Defense Authorization Act, which will rebuild our national security, repair our national defense, and restore America's leadership position in the world.

The NDAA will provide our military with the resources they need to address our current threats. We have increased funding 10 percent over the previous administration. The NDAA will fund Dyess Air Force Base and other military installations at appropriate levels, increase the size of our armed services, enhance and modernize our defense arsenal, give our troops a pay raise.

If anybody in the Federal Government has performed with excellence and with courage and distinction, it is our men and women in uniform, and they deserve a pay raise.

This NDAA will also build on the reforms that we have enacted over the last 2 years to update, improve, and streamline services to our armed services.

By passing the NDAA, we send a message to the world that America will continue to be the greatest force for good in the history of mankind; a message to our allies who promote liberty and democracy that you can count on us to defend you, we have got your back; a message to our brave military men and women that we are standing firmly behind you, we are going to put our money where our mouth is, we are going to protect you as you protect us; and a message to our enemies that America is no longer in the business of making idle threats.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I want to thank Chairman THORNBERRY for his hard work on this bill and for being a tireless advocate for our military. I am proud to call him a fellow west Texan, and I am even more proud to call him my friend.

One must wonder, on the heels of our 241st birthday, how did this oldest continuous democracy persist for two centuries against all odds? Don't you wonder?

Mr. Speaker, vote for NDAA, vote for our military.

God bless America.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 54 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.